



## **Illinois Conservation Foundation Announces 2019 Conservation Achievement Scholarship Recipients**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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SPRINGFIELD, IL. – The Illinois Conservation Foundation (ICF) today announced the selections of Killian Maire Delaney of Franklin, McKenna M. Gayon of Addison, and Shelby Mitchell of Murphysboro as the recipients of the 2019 Conservation Achievement Scholarships. The high school seniors each will receive \$2,000 to apply to specified college expenses.

"Through the Conservation Achievement Scholarship program, the ICF is able to recognize and reward outstanding Illinois youth for their conservation stewardship and protection of our natural resources," said Colleen Callahan, chairman of the Illinois Conservation Foundation Board of Directors and director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

"Congratulations to Killian Delaney, McKenna Gayon and Shelby Mitchell for their passion and dedication to making our world a better place and setting an example for all of us."



**Killian Maire Delaney, Franklin High School, Franklin**

Killian Delaney has practiced her environmental stewardship as a University of Illinois Master Naturalist Intern, helping remove invasive plants from natural areas in central Illinois and assisting with tallgrass prairie restoration projects. Delaney created a web-based business promoting prairie restoration and providing seed packets to encourage backyard prairie

plantings. As a high school student, she also volunteered on local park beautification projects, conservation education programs and assisted Illinois Department of Natural Resources personnel with goose population monitoring. Delaney plans to attend Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, Missouri.



**McKenna M. Gayon, Addison Trail High School, Addison**

McKenna Gayon worked as a student volunteer on conservation and education programs through the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, including efforts to recover and protect populations of endangered Blanding's turtles. Working with partner agencies, Gayon has also assisted with projects to enhance habitat for other endangered and threatened species, helped raise and release pollinators, including Monarch butterflies, and worked at a local wildlife rehabilitation facility helping care for injured and orphaned animals. Gayon is planning to attend Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin.



**Shelby Mitchell, Murphysboro High School, Murphysboro**

Shelby Mitchell's love of the outdoors led her to begin volunteering at the Touch of Nature Environmental Center in Jackson County as a junior high student. When not working at camps and helping other youth connect to nature, Mitchell helps build and maintain trails and enhance her training as a youth educator. She aspires to a career in forest recreation and park management. Mitchell plans to attend John A. Logan College in Carterville.

"As we celebrate the accomplishments of these outstanding youth conservationists, we also send out a thank you to all of the donors to the Illinois Conservation Foundation's scholarship

fund,” said Eric Schenck, executive director, ICF. “Thanks to their generosity, the Conservation Achievement Scholarship program has provided much-needed support to students like Killian, McKenna and Shelby from throughout Illinois.”

Applicants for the ICF Conservation Achievement Scholarship program must be outstanding high school seniors in Illinois who have demonstrated effective, voluntary, long-term dedication to the preservation, protection, enhancement and/or promotion of Illinois' natural resources. Other criteria also apply. For more information, check the ICF website at [www.ilcf.org](http://www.ilcf.org).

For information on donating to and supporting the Conservation Achievement Scholarships or other ICF programs, contact the foundation at 217-785-2003, or donate online at [www.ilcf.org](http://www.ilcf.org).

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